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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, ONE

26 October 1962

SUBJECT: Dismantling of SS Missile Sites in Cuba

1. I do not believe that the President's objectives and commitments of dismantling the SS missile sites in Cuba will be attained by present measures. The blockade will prevent further build up, no more.

2. The Secretary General has proposed a 2-3 week suspension of the blockade by the US and of the arms shipments by the USSR as a period for discussions and possibly a summit meeting. This was probably done at Soviet suggestion, possibly not, but the speed at which the Soviets snapped it up points to the probability.

3. This 2-3 week period is a critical one. During this time the SS missile installation can probably be in large measure completed. When they are, we should assume that they have high yield heads. During this period there could be a deployment of Soviet submarines into the area which could and probably would be in complete radio silence, without US detection and with warning, if any, incident only to other measures. These two measures, made possible by the 2-3 weeks discussion time, can considerably strengthen the Soviet military posture in the Caribbean.

4. The SS missiles can be taken out by one of 3 methods:

By negotiation,
By air destruction,
By a landing.

5. I think it highly unlikely that the Soviets will dismantle these missiles by reason of present US measures except as a quid pro quo price of either:

- (a) Berlin
- (b) US missile sites in Europe.

6. Their elimination by air can easily be accomplished by the US now. Their destruction later would be at the risk of firing a few of them at the US. We consider the latter improbable but by no means impossible. Air operations could not assure that all had been eliminated and to this extent would be an incomplete measure.

7. Their elimination by a landing would accomplish the President's objective but at risks well known. A landing would be made increasingly hazardous by a submarine deployment to the Cuban approaches.

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8. I believe that the 2-3 weeks "negotiating" period:

- (a) Will not result in the elimination of the missiles.
- (b) Will enable the Soviets to largely complete their missile installations.
- (c) Will give them an improved military posture in the area.
- (d) Will add to our political difficulties in tightening the blockade if necessary.
- (e) May result in a decay of the strong OAS position presently in our favor.
- (f) Will facilitate the accomplishment of the basic Soviet objectives:

The use of their missiles as a "swap" for our position in Berlin or our missile installation, in Europe, or both.

9. I believe that the alternative to a forceful elimination of the missiles or a "swap" is that we live with them from now on.

10. I think an estimate of Soviet intentions and actions during this 2-3 week period would be of interest and importance.

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